



Dear Friends of First 5 California,



Today was a landmark day for California's youngest children. At a press event at the Capitol, Governor Schwarzenegger and legislative leaders joined with First 5 California to announce its commitment to invest \$20 million in a statewide health care program for the state's youngest children. California's top elected officials applauded the commission's funding commitment, which will help provide health access to the state's 174,000 uninsured children ages 0 to 5.



"First 5 is doing a remarkable job of helping and supporting our children. Putting up \$20 million for health care for children is an important foundation to build on," said Governor Schwarzenegger at a press conference with the 100% Campaign and legislative and community leaders. "I love what First 5 is doing."

Senate President pro Tem Don Perata and Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez issued statements congratulating First 5 California's State Commission for unanimously approving the funding resolution and helping move the state closer to a solution.

"I applaud First 5's commitment and leadership in expanding health care coverage for children," Perata said. Speaker Núñez added that First 5 California is "planting the seeds for an expanded health care system that covers all of California's children."

Children without health coverage have no access to regular checkups and often go without needed care. As a result, uninsured children are 70 percent less likely to receive medical care for common conditions, such as ear infections, according to The California Endowment. They are also 30 percent less likely to receive medical attention when they are injured.

The consequences of lacking coverage extend beyond physical health – children without health coverage are often ill, hindering their ability to pay attention in class and keep up with school activities.

"We are proud to help lead the way in protecting the most vulnerable among us – our children," said Kris Perry, executive director of First 5 California. "We look forward to working with our state's leaders to secure a healthy future for all our children."

The \$20 million contribution by First 5 California is contingent upon the state establishing a health coverage program for all children effective January 1, 2008. The newly-developed program must provide for ongoing funding beyond First 5 California's 2007-08 commitment.